



Thanks in part to unique VIPER Program, Military Times cites WCCC as among Best for Vets nationwide

The highly respected publication, Military Times, has announced that Warren County Community College is among the nation's list of the "Best for Vets: Colleges 2015" rankings. In their fifth year, the rankings factor in the most comprehensive school-by-school assessment of veteran and military students' success rates.

As with all Best for Vets rankings, Best for Vets: Colleges 2015 is an editorially independent news project that evaluates the many factors that make an organization a good fit for service members, military veterans and their families. Warren County Community College soared to No. 13 in part as a result of its hugely successful VIPER program.

"We are extremely proud of this designation," said WCCC President, Dr. Will Austin. "We continue to work hard to make the educational experience as seamless as possible for our military people. A lot of colleges do help current military and veterans, but our VIPER program takes things a step further. The VIPER program is a big component of our efforts to work with these folks and help them ultimately to transition back into the workforce seamlessly by getting them the credits they deserve for their military experience."

Earlier this year WCCC was recognized for the second straight year as one of the Top 20 percent of colleges nationwide as being Military Friendly (by Victory Media). The Military Friendly Schools list honors the top 20 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools in the country that are doing the most to embrace America's military service members, veterans, and spouses as students and ensure their success on campus.

The hugely popular VIPER program is a key component of why WCCC is being seen as a military friendly school by numerous sources. Last year the college launched what has become the nationally recognized Veterans In Pursuit of Educational Readiness (VIPER) program, which assists military veterans, National Guard/Reservists and active military personnel to get on the fast-track toward earning their college degrees. The program, launched in conjunction with New Jersey's Thomas Edison State College, allows veterans to translate military training into college credits. The first graduates of the VIPER program received their degrees in May of 2013. Fox News Network highlighted VIPER in a broadcast last year.

Current military personnel and veterans from around the globe are now a part of the program. They represent all branches of the military and those currently out of the military represent varied backgrounds and employment. Many of the students are based overseas, while many are stateside.

Through VIPER, veterans are eligible to receive up to 34 credits for their military training plus up to 11 credits for courses directly related to one of six programs of study: Automotive Technology, Business, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Food and Beverage Management. This means they may be able to graduate with an Associate's Degree in as little as one semester and then, if they so choose, seamlessly transfer to Thomas Edison to complete a Bachelor's program. All VIPER participants are also eligible for in-county rates regardless of location. In addition, courses offered online make it convenient no matter where the student is based.

"Helping our military folks is what it is all about," said Richard Feldman, VIPER Coordinator at WCCC. "They give so much for our country it is important that we help them in any way we can. To be recognized by these highly respected groups is a testament to our efforts."

The survey-based Best for Vets: Colleges doesn't manipulate mainstream research to skew more "veteran." The detailed survey requires schools to meticulously document a tremendous array of services, special rules, accommodations and financial incentives offered to military and veteran students and to describe many aspects of veteran culture on a campus.

"We factor in what is, to our knowledge, the most detailed school-by-school data on veteran students' academic success anywhere, including graduation, retention, persistence and course completion rates," says Amanda Miller, editor of Best for Vets. Two years ago, only 11 percent of the hundreds of schools surveyed could provide that level of detail. This year, that figure is up to 45 percent. "By recognizing only the schools that do the most, we believe we're helping to raise the bar in veteran student services."

For the full Best for Vets: Colleges 2015 rankings, go to: www.militarytimes.com/bestforvets-colleges2015. The rankings are published in full in the issues of Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times and Marine Corps Times, Military Times EDGE magazine; and online at MilitaryTimes.com, as well as ArmyTimes.com, NavyTimes.com, AirForceTimes.com and MarineCorpsTimes.com.

Military Times' series of Best for Vets survey-based rankings includes: Colleges, Career & Technical Colleges, Business Schools, Franchises, Employers and Law Enforcement.

For more information about the VIPER program, contact the VIPER Coordinator, at 908-835-3134. To learn more about WCCC, visit www.warren.edu.

